

Elaborating on Finnish-Russian Bilingual Identity in Oral and Written Discourse

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1. Introduction

People don't usually think about who they are until they are provoked to reflect about their identity. Questions about belonging, their origin and their mother tongue can serve as such provocations. At the same time, these reflections can, through social refusal, take on a particular quality for the person in question (e.g. when we tell somebody that he is not a Russian, while he always thought he was). Speaking a language doesn't necessarily involve any special attitude toward its use until it becomes justified through the situations of its use. It is interesting to follow the ways in which people deal with the emerging self-reconstruction problems of a balanced personality, how they reflect about the meaning of 'being Russian', and how they overcome dilemmas and build bridges in order to articulate a fully-fledged self. According to Joseph (2003), the study of language and identity has developed into one of the most dynamic interfaces linking linguistics with anthropology, sociology and psychology. The specific changes in one's first language due to the linguistic and cultural influence of the environment have also been focused on (e.g. in Clyne 1992; Extra, Verhoeven 1999; Fishman 1989; Haugen 1953; Hyltenstam, Obler 1989; Kouritzin 1999; Seliger, Vago 1991, Waas 1996 and with a special focus on bilingual education in Corson 2001; Cummins 1996; Edwards 1985; Krashen, Biber 1988; Lambert, Freed 1992; Wong Fillmore 1996).

The Russian emigration has experienced four waves during the 20th century. A number of studies dealing with this subject are of a relatively recent date, because, firstly, Russian speakers living abroad before 1988 had only restricted contacts with people from Soviet Union; secondly, the massive influx of newcomers began after 1990-1991. During the last two decades, about 5 million people speaking Russian as their mother tongue have immigrated to Europe from the former Soviet Union, and this number is growing all the time. About 28 million Russians are living in the Commonwealth of Independent States (Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was created in December 1991 and unites: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine) and Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania are countries that became independent in 1991-1992, but were previously parts of the Soviet Union).

The changes in language use and cultural repertoire, the ways of acculturation and integration among those kinds of immigrants have been studied (e.g. by Andrews [1999], Dittmar, Spolsky & Walters [1998]; Golubeva-Monatkina [1999]; Granovskaja [1995], Krasil'nikova [2001]; Meng [2001]; Pfandl [1998]; Polinsky [2000]; Protassova [1996, 2000]; Stangé-Zhirovova [1998]; Zemskaja [2001]; Reitemeier [2002]). These studies mostly focused on the peculiarities of lexical, grammatical and discourse forms used under the influence of similarities and differences between the immigrants' old language and the language they are learning, how much are they dependent on the new environment and on the consciousness of the convergence processes. Less attention has been paid to the construction of new sociolinguistic identities in individuals and groups, their attitudes towards the second languages, their connection to their actual language behavior and to their successful integration into a new society.

While individuals possess a repertoire of identities, acquired through socializations within family and society, manifested in part through language, at the same time they construct a repertoire of identities thanks to contact with other people. If so, being an integral part of the new societies in Europe, Russian-speaking immigrants construct their personalities in a mutual exchange of information, sharing experiences and acquiring new political and cultural attitudes. Everyday practices are interrelated with language symbolization. In their previous life, speakers of Russian were adjusted to those practices in Russian. Now, turning to a different reality, Russian-speaking immigrants are often

forced to adopt new words from surrounding languages and include them into their discourse in mother tongue. Even more, they have to use “imported” ways of thinking and expressing the own ideas in order to speak about this different reality.

The teaching and learning of Russian as mother tongue might be approached as potentially having both a positive and a negative effort: it helps immigrants not to abandon ties to Russia, but this leads to a certain marginalization of the Russian-speaking community. Due to the maintenance of a partly mythological Russian identity of the 19-20th centuries, Russian is still in many aspects an ideological language, and it is perceived so not only by many people abroad, but even in contemporary Russia itself. Russian is not just a language of an ethnic group, but a language of certain deeds and ideas. That’s why the intergenerational discourse between old and new Russian immigrants abroad has a particular value: different pictures of the world meet here. In a new Europe, so different from the one that Russian-speaking people have experienced before their emigration from Soviet Union and Russia, new conceptions of tolerance, human rights, and negative attitudes towards racism and xenophobia must be acquired.

Ethnic identity can be seen as an artificial construction, having a social nature. Identity can grow or blow up, it can be ignored (in case of not knowing what it is, or with purpose, as in a voluntary act) or be the object of intellectual reflection. It, can be picked up together with norms of family or school socialization, or be postulated as the rejection of different backgrounds (“I am not..., not...”). The models of ethnic identification include some measures of certain socio-psychological aspects such as the cognitive act of recognition and categorization of somebody (including oneself) as the possessor of a particular labeled identity, which is in most cases connected with membership in some category or group, or a social category (Liebkind 1992). The special means of linguistic identity construction are considered in Fitzgerald (1993), LePage, Tabouret-Keller (1985), Muelhaeusler, Harre (1990), Phillipson (1992), Romaine (1994). The methods used to analyze identities in discourse are based upon interviews, documents, spontaneous interactions, self-presentations, conversations (e.g., theories developed by S. Hall, D. Martin, E. Goffman, D. Schiffrin, H. Tajfel, R. Wodak etc.).

Applied to my focus group (Russian-speaking immigrants), this category examines the fact that it is unified not ethnically, but linguistically and culturally. Only when immigrants refer to their ethnic origin or present social groups, ethnic relationships can be established within each country. The integration into a welcoming society is also a function of a growing self-esteem, employment in accordance with a personal educational level, and a general rootedness in Finnish culture.

2. Russian-speaking immigrants in modern Europe

The concepts of a mother tongue, citizenship and nationality meant different things under the Soviet rule. Citizens could have any possible mother tongue, and nobody was extremely worried about it (though in national republics, people raised voices against russification in public or in private), but the second ‘mother tongue’, as official documents called it, was Russian, and the quality of Russian was really important for the speaker’s social and administrative career. Bilingualism was understood as the capacity to speak Russian. It ranged from Russian-only to monolingualism in national language (maybe, with some insertions, calques and borrowings from Russian) for national-born citizens. Citizenship meant ‘USSR’ or ‘Soviet’ for all, and the word *sovetskij* was an adjective, so that everybody had to call himself a ‘Soviet man’ (or, better, a Soviet human being, because there are no gender semantics in the word *chelovek*, even if the grammatical gender is masculine). During ‘perestroika’ and especially after the dissolution of the USSR, people have invented a substantive which connoted a former citizen of the USSR, as well as the former USSR itself, which coincides in Russian with the name for ‘shovel’ and has connotations with dust and simplicity, something not technological enough, self-critical and ironic, *sovok*. The fifth point in the questionnaire for a curriculum vitae, which had to be filled in whenever one was hired for a job, was about nationality, and it had to be the same as in the passport. Nationalities were given after one of the parents’ nationality; there were about 150 indigenous nationalities in the USSR (and still are in Russia). In the first two decades after the revolution of 1917, the national policy was to develop various languages, to give them an alphabet, literacy, and to form national communist elites (e.g., Russians had to learn national languages of the territories where they were dwelling), to educate children, to communicate in national

languages and to use them for professional needs. In the late 1930s, in the perspective of the coming war and expansion of communist ideas into new territories under a more Western influence, many of the Latin-based alphabets were replaced by Cyrillic letters, the majority of the national schools and churches were closed, and the role of the Russian language functioned to unify and to universalize.

Nationalities were not equal, and there were two different scales with which to order nationalities: 1) an official scale, where Russians were the best, Ukrainians came immediately after, and all of the title nationalities were welcome in order of their presentation by the numbers of inhabitants in any given republic; 2) an unofficial scale (depending on the historical period), in which some nationalities were banished (e.g., under Stalin it was important not to belong to a repressed nationality [as German, Kalmyk]). In the 70s to have a foreign nationality was more interesting and promising as a means of emigration than to be *nacmen*, a representative of a certain not-so-civilized nationality (Spanish were children of Spanish children who came after the Republican war in Spain; Greeks were Russian Greeks, etc.). To be a Jew meant not to be allowed to do many things, to be disenfranchised of certain rights, but to be allowed to emigrate; for other different nationalities, some things were allowed, and some not. The communist doctrine supposed that the concept of nation will step by step dissolve in the future, but in reality, people were attached to their nationalities. 'Russian' was just 'normal', typical, corresponding to the overall standard, associated with the norm, and Russians couldn't understand what the concept of nationality could symbolize for a logistically small ethnic community, or everybody might not want to be Russian. Russians have not suffered from being Russians; they were only stripped of the right to demonstrate any national sentiments. Belonging to the most populous nationality in the Soviet Union was mistaken to mean that one was the greatest, and consequently Russian was the collective homogenizing language of the socialist way of life. In national formations, the leaders were supposed to be representatives of title nationalities, and the second most important role was always given to a Russian. Otherwise, the national principles wouldn't have worked. For example, art was proclaimed to be national by form and socialistic by content, while nationalistic aspirations were likewise suppressed. This is the ideological baggage that the Russians took into the emigration: the right of the 'big' nation to speak its language everywhere. This could end in two possible variants of behavior: to continue to belong to the greatest nation and have ties to Russia; to form a provisional minority in transition, trying to assimilate as quickly as possible. The third way – to be the representative of an ethnic minority – must orient itself to an example in the past, and this could be the first wave of Russian emigration. Then, the picture of the *rodina* (birth country, fatherland, homeland) 'land we are taking with us on the soles of our shoes' became the Russian culture before democratic transformation; that which they save from 'wild' capitalism.

Many Russian emigrants told me that they have understood the problems of Jews and other nationalities within the former Soviet Union only after those souls have emigrated, and have experienced for themselves racism and xenophobia. Finland has racism on a much lower scale than many other European countries, but still about 38% of the population possess some type of racist views (Jaakkola 2000). On the other hand, in Russia, language was not associated with the nationality, and therefore not many citizens had bad feelings when they couldn't speak or read in a language that had the same name as their nationality. This is also a base for the construction of a new identity after the emigration, and especially for the disillusionment about the role of the Russian people in the history and development of new views concerning the relationship between language, nationality and citizenship.

Mobilization of ethnic sentiments by national elites after the collapse of the USSR, and the blossom of a wide range of different nationalistic and ethnic tendencies represent a large spectrum of possibilities, beginning with the separation from Russia (and the expulsion of all Russians) up to imposed Orthodoxy and artificial revitalization of traditions as symbols of distancing the Russian community from the de-ethnicized past to a deliberate present (as 'one ethnicity among the others'). For Russians abroad, it meant an adjustment to a new role of an ethnic minority among others, connected with the abjection of the former supranational ideology, construction of new amended identities and hard work within their own cultural identity and traditions. The old concept of internationalism (in the communist view: equality of all nations, joint efforts of working people all over the world against their exploiters, prevalent collective versus individual values, predominant attention to the quality of internal ideas versus the quality of self-expression and, accordingly, linguistic abilities and language

development in general) must be now replaced by ethnopluralism, differentiation, individualism, ethnicity, self-realization, and responsibility. This transformation of ideology hasn't been easy for all. Demographic trends in Russia indicate that the percentages of non-Russian and non-Fenno-Ugrian ethnicities increase rapidly, and the overall picture of ethnic distribution in Russia changes. In big cities, about 70% of the pupils at schools are immigrants, and have originated from Asia and the Caucasus. Mobilization and resurgence of ethnic movements in Russia was extremely typical in the first half of the 1990s and now it has entered into a more stable phase. (For these problems, see also Khazanov 1995, Laitin 1998, Landau, Kellner-Heinkele 2001.)

Some things suggesting the uniqueness of the Russian-speaking people are perhaps not seized upon by sociolinguists. Otherwise, it is not long before one notices that the contrast between the new and the oldest Russian-speaking (many of them Russian Orthodox) communities sometimes have nothing in common but their language. Still, the symbolic force of language is not only historical. Ironically, Moscow has developed a special policy toward *sootchestvenniki* (co-fatherland people), as they are called in Russia, even if they have never been to Russia and have another nationality and citizenship. The fact that they are Russian-speaking allows Russian authorities to apply this term to them. Strictly speaking, the Russianness of the Russians living outside of Russia was influenced by the local languages and national ways of life, but, until recently, these changes were ignored by officials. The problem of Russian minorities within the former Soviet Union presents problems for Russian foreign policy, for the former Soviet Republics and now independent states, and for the status of minorities within these states as well. Pal Kolstoe (1996) suggests that the collapse of the unitary Soviet state has plunged its former citizens into a profound identity crisis: they were formerly highly-esteemed members of the dominant nationality and have now been turned now into disdained minority groups abroad. The process of their identity formation has been influenced by a number of cultural, economic and political factors which work differently in the various non-Russian successor states – therefore, Russians living outside the Russian Federation have developed different identities, setting them apart from the Russian core group. George Schöpflin (2000) observes that ethnicity can serve as a basis for struggle or consensus, depending on how it is politicized.

As the Russian writer Tat'jana Tolstaja, who has lived in many countries but always returns to Moscow, has surmised: "If I were told that my whole life long I was going to live only in Russia and communicate only with Russians, I would for sure hang myself. [...] And will somebody understand me if I say that if they would promise me that I will never return to Russia and won't meet any Russian at all, I would for sure hang myself?" And also: "The term 'Russians' is employed with a double and triple standard: there is no general agreement about the filling of this term, and the use of this term is more and more often grasped with suspicion and disapproval. Self-identification is difficult: language, ethnos, territory and history ... everything is in doubt. Briefly, this is the time when any attempt to identify himself in this chaos is undertaken by everybody individually and independently from the identification's result for every single individual, it would be incontestably subjected to deteriorative derision, reproach or simply would be rejected as lawless, not only by your enemy, but maybe by your friend as well" ("Russian world", 1993, various editions). The façade of Russia's situation has been looking more stable since the time when this essay was written, but the inner problems of self-identification have persisted. They have a different direction now, due to the large affluence of immigrants from Caucasus and Asia (e.g., the widely distributed newspaper "Komsomol'skaja Pravda" proclaims that Russian will be a minority in Moscow by 2050 [20.01.2003, 24-25]).

When speaking about the identity of a 'Russian' immigrant, we understand that the cultural forces at play are the classic Russian literature of the 19th century and the Silver Age of Literature at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the Soviet way of life. In saying so, we mean that life was a combination of the diverse influences of national cultures within the Soviet Union (studies of these national cultures at school, imported goods and symbols for different seasons of the year, travels into national regions and acquired souvenirs, accentuation in Russian speech, culinary recipes, the need to feel internationally towards people other than Russians, Moscow as the Euro-Asiatic capital and other mythological components). The Orthodox religion was more significant for the first Wave of White Russian emigration after the October revolution than it was for later Waves of Soviet people, for whom it represents – independently of their confession – one point of commonness, but is not obligatory a practice or a belief. If I go further in essentialising cultural and ethnic differences between the

immigrants with Russian native or near-native language(s), I must say that the climatic surroundings in the past and in present have influenced the immigrant way of life, as well as the modern political developments in Europe.

3. General information: about Russians in Finland

Finno-Ugrian peoples have been living alongside, among and with Slavic tribes for at least two thousand years. The Swedish influence on Finns was much stronger in religion and ideology, but economic connections to Russia were constant in Eastern part of Finland, and in Karelia, which was already ceded to Russia by 1721, and the Orthodox church dominated. Wars between Russia and Sweden for control over the Baltic Sea have been fought since at least the 18th century, and ended in 1809 when Finland was annexed to Russia. Fighting against russification, Finns developed their own national consciousness, and, in 1917, Finland became independent. Ingrian people were settlers from Finland, who dwelt along the border of the Baltic Sea between Finland and Estonia. These settlers remained in Russia after Finland separated from it, having Soviet passports and 'Finn' as their designated nationality. Till the mid-1930s, schools held classes in the Finnish language, and Ingrian churches and other cultural activities have been supported by the Soviet authorities, yet afterwards the ethnic policy changed and they were abolished. Many Finns lived in St. Petersburg, and didn't return to Finland (they were given their last chance in the 1930s), and, during the same decade, Finns came over the border or immigrated from the USA, due to propaganda about the Soviet way of life. Many of them were interned, accused of collaboration with anti-Soviet elements, were imprisoned in labor camps or brought to Kazakhstan and Siberia, only because they were Finns. During the Winter War in 1939, Karelia and the city of Vyborg were taken again by the Soviets, and all the population (including the Russians who lived there from the beginning of the 18th century, or were emigrants after the revolution of 1917) were evacuated to Central Finland. During the beginning of World War II, this territory was taken over by Finns again, but after the war it was once again left to the USSR. Finnish citizens in the Soviet Union (those still alive) were subsequently allowed to return to Finland only after Stalin's death. In 1990, Finnish President Mauno Koivisto invited Russian Finns to come to Finland. The Ingrians were rehabilitated in 1993.

In 2002, the population of Finland was approximately 5,200,000 persons, and among these permanent residents, approximately 100,000 were other than Finnish nationals. The largest group is represented by the nationals of Russia or of the Commonwealth of Independent States (nearly 25,000), the next group were the Estonians (nearly 12,000, and many of them also native or near-native speakers of Russian), and there are other non-territorial ethnic and linguistic groups. Quantitatively, even Swedish Swedes (8,000) and Somalis (4,500) represented smaller groups of foreigners. Among the immigrants, Arabic people seem to become mostly often Finnish citizens. Altogether, non-Finnish residents comprise less than 2% of the entire population. Swedish is the second official state language in Finland, and the share of Swedish-speaking Finns among the entire population is 5.6%. Less than 2,000 are registered as speakers of the Sámi language. The Roma, Tatar and Jews are also considered to be historical minorities in Finland, as well as Old Russians (about 4,000 people). About 1.1% of Finnish citizens belong to the Orthodox Church, and among this 1.1% many are Karelians. The Old Russians in Finland have been studied, for example, by Baschmakoff, Leinonen (2001), Harjula, Leinonen, Ovchinnikova (1993), Horn (1997), Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000), Leisiö (2001), Protassova (1994, 1998).

The exact number of Russian-speaking people in Finland might be between 31,000 and 65,000 (people can be counted after their passport or their language, but both methods are not trustworthy enough). This Russian linguistic group is heterogeneous in origin, as well as in the quality of their Russian language and their command of Finnish and Swedish. Since 1990, Ingrian – or Russian Finnish – returnees are joining the Russian-speaking community, as well as Russian spouses and Russian employees. The European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages considers Russian to be a minority language in Finland, the unique case in Europe till 2004, when the Baltic States with their large Russian population groups will join the European Union.

The public in-group discussion about the quality of the Russian language as it is spoken in Finland is maintained by one official broadcasting program and one commercial radio channel, as well as in

Russian newspapers and meetings of Russian-speaking societies on a regular basis. There are up to ten day care centers which provide their services in Russian; some institutions (like senior homes, churches and stores) employ people with sufficient Russian-language command to provide better services. Governmental and private initiatives for establishing classes, schools and circles where Russian is studied as mother tongue have been fruitful, especially in Southern and Eastern Finland. The National Board of Education launched several projects to combine studies of Russian as a mother tongue with studies of Russian as a foreign language (two-way and bilingual classes, leisure camps, distant teaching and internet connections). On the level of higher vocational training and even on the university level, there are also possibilities for studying one's course work in Russian, parallel to Finnish: a solid number of courses are given in Russian, while the contents correspond to Finnish programs, and the Finnish language is intensively taught and used as an educational instrument.

According to the Agreement on the Foundations of Relations between the Republic of Finland and the Russian Federation (1992), "the Parties shall give their support to the preservation of the identity of Finns and Finno-Ugric peoples and nationalities in Russia and, correspondingly in Finland, to the identity of persons originating in Russia. They shall protect each other's languages, cultures and historical monuments". Finnish authorities support the doctrine according to which functional bilingualism must be provided for persons with a mother tongue that differs from Finnish or Swedish. Likewise, for immigrants, their integration requires promotion (maintenance and development) of their own language, culture and identity, as well as the strengthening of at least one official language, thereby avoiding the risk of social exclusion. The Finnish Institute for Russian and East European Studies is a research institute maintained by the State, and one of its missions is to support the languages and cultures of Russian and East European immigrants in Finland. On the one hand, Finns feed many prejudices against Russia, but they also nurture a big hope in the positive development of this country. "The weakening of Russia's position in international politics and the simultaneous strengthening of Finland's position has meant that the Finnish attitude of deference towards Russia has changed: it has not become hostile or unfriendly, but at times it has gone beyond what can be described as the interaction of equal partners. On the grass-roots level people are prone to being arrogant and disdainful, which also reflects upward at times" (Pennonen 2003). As a member of the European Union, Finland promotes special policies on Russia, being the only EU country thus far to share a border with Russia.

Immigrant organizations are often places where people look at each other as if they were in a mirror, and this mirror sometimes tells the truth. Not all of the immigrants want to accept to take part in those 'minority' meetings, and almost half of them told me that they are not interested in communication in Russian just for the pleasure of speaking some Russian. Therefore, I'll try to argue for a broader and deeper understanding of identity development among the speakers themselves and their environment. This understanding should be adopted by teachers, administrators and policy makers. After all, policy decisions in today's Russia and Finland require an understanding of the relationships between one's home and school language, ethnicity and linguistic identity, the emotional regulation of self-acceptance and a positive attitude toward the environment.

4. The design of my present research

My present study is part of a multifaceted research project concerning the peculiarities of the Russian language in Finland. It has been conducted since 1990, and more than two hundred people with native or near-native command of Russian have been interviewed. Other written and oral testimonies were also collected. Methodologically, the basis for this research has been formed by ethnography, discourse analysis and biographical study (Abels 1998; Chambers 1994; Fuchs 1984). The purpose of this study is to investigate how much, and how often, Russian and Finnish (and maybe other languages) are used by different groups of subjects, and how such uses are affected by speakers' activities, what is the influence of one's background during the loss of the first language, how the language shift can be enhanced or impeded by one's environment. This study also examines which results come from the common opinion of the first and second countries of the immigrants, and of different extra-linguistic conditions for language use. Within this particular body of research, people are dealing with different concepts: they remember and depict their multilingual situations within their former life and today, the

importance (or the nuisance) of their opportunity to be bilingual or multilingual, and the various meanings attached to nationality. The intra-generational and inter-generational communication between different linguistic subgroups of Russian-speakers and their interviews were videotaped, audio-recorded and transcribed; questionnaires were addressed to all Russian-speaking inhabitants of Finland (special thanks to the editorial board of the Russian-speaking newspaper 'Spektr'). This material represents the research data that has been analyzed for this study. The fact that the interviewer was Russian probably influenced the course of the interviews in such a way that informants were more challenged to speak Russian well. They were sometimes worried about the quality of their Russian, but they were nevertheless more relaxed about the quality of their Finnish. I sought to collect the widest possible assortment of views, and to underline similarities as well as trace the discrepancies. The subjects investigated bear "masks"; no personally destructive remarks are made; none of the issues relate directly to identifiable individuals.

The self-definition of humans that is known as identity can be studied through its manifestations throughout the life course. In Finland, Russian-speaking minority members are struggling with the controversial aspects of their identities, in order to create a balanced and happy life that is free from fear and humiliation. A detailed analysis of bilingual autobiographies identifies explicitly and quantifiably precisely where their origin and language use differs from those who are monolingual. Though Finland's society has been Finnish-Swedish bilingual for the past centuries, speaking Sámi as well as speaking Russian (or Somali, or Tatar) is not so typical for the average individual. Still, in some situations, speaking a minority language can be regarded as a privilege, for example, when one is representing a minority on an international level, receiving a grant for the promotion of an indigenous culture – yet those privileges are cultivated from the work of previous generations; their fight for the rights of minorities and the losses already asserted. Conflicts between a Russian-speaking minority and the mainstream population of Finland are, to a high percent, due to the lack of common language and cultural background (as most informants said in their questionnaires). Yet these conflicts also arise through the inability to be like everyone else, the growing dissonance between the pretensions to be highly educated, special, unique and precious, and the harsh facts of everyday life, being unable to express even the simple emotions. In my opinion, these conflicts are even more frequent and tragic in Russia, but through memories, people relive them. Those who have dwelt for a longer time in Finland, and who come to compare their situation with the one in Russia, seem satisfied that their new home is in Finland. To be accepted, one has to give up an important part of his or her identity, and this is not necessarily language, but communicative behavior. This outward adaptation happens to all Russian-speaking immigrants after some years of sojourn in Finland, and some ties to people living here also emerge, for Russians as well as for Finns. Nevertheless, my study participants expressed the sentiment that they missed something: the situation of living abroad, even when the whole family is present, and even though one has a Finnish passport, was still extraordinary for them. Maybe others would view it differently, but they were not participating in my study. I suppose this last human category consists of subjects who have lost their Russian, yet still have their Russian family names; those who were born in Finland and have no personal contacts with Russia. If I met such individuals, they told me that even though they have such Russian names, they are not Russian-speaking. They said that their grandmother might have spoken Russian, and that they had no troubles identifying themselves as Finns. This tendency was evident also among those people who spoke Finnish better than Russian, or whose children haven't preserved Russian language themselves.

Discussions of ethnic autobiographies have been subject of multiple investigations in recent times – a genre from which people learn about the background, attitudes and aspirations, and, above all, about the original culture of a certain group of immigrants. Blending personal narratives with an analysis of the Russian language used within them, and with the objective facts of employment and the overall success of these people in integrating their lives within the dominant Finnish community, I will attempt to describe the ways my subjects justify their lives, their identities and their preferences for the use of one or another given language. At the same time, I will also explore the culture of the Russian-speaking community, and attempt to understand whether it is truly united or not.

4.1 Material

The modern forms of ethnicity undergo a reinterpretation when seen in the light of the development of concepts of nationality, citizenship, socio-cultural integration and adaptation of the traditional practices to both global and universal processes. In this study, I tried to portray varied dimensions in which elements of similarity and difference – place of birth, language of the family, ethnicity of one’s parents and relatives, friendships, school education, professional training and career, field of interests and sentiments of guilt – create dynamic tensions inside personalities. I also tried to show how similarity and difference combine to constitute a basis for the construction of a collective identity. My findings can be interpreted in different ways. They bring together accounts of narrators from different backgrounds and autobiographies. The personal narratives introduce from the different sides the facts and ideas involved in the construction of their own bilingual identity. Case studies based on real bilingual experiences are described in sufficient detail as to be comparable with analogous cases from a similar or different multicultural context.

In the section about Old Russians, I am describing cases in a descending order, from the oldest person to the youngest, and in the section dedicated to the New Russians, I begin my trajectory with the youngest person. The number of women participating in the study was slightly more than the number of men. When I translated a transcript from Russian language, my goal was to render a legible translation rather than an utterance-by-utterance translation, so grammar came first, because this made the quotes more intelligible. Although it is vastly important to remain faithful to everything the interviewee says, what I was attempting to simultaneously do to stay faithful to the content of the interview, and to render a transcript that is, above all, understandable for a person who is reading it in English. In the transcripts, I appear as EP.

4.2 Excerpts from the life stories of old Russians

The oldest person who participated in my inquiry was Xenia F., a woman, born in Helsinki 1905. She has studied at a Russian gymnasium, and was a member of the Russian-speaking society. She found her husband among the Russian emigrants, and she had associations and ties with Russian her whole life long. Yet, until recently, she has never been to either Russia or the Soviet Union, even before the revolution in 1917. Her Russian was associated with Finland. At gymnasium, she and her classmates were taught French, but she didn’t learn it. She studied Finnish. “We had to make a choice; French or Finnish. I studied Finnish, because I thought it was better to learn the mother / the language in which you live, than the French which you don’t really need... In my childhood, Swedish was spoken here much more than Finnish, so that I always spoke Swedish very well”. This view was shared by many people for whom Russian was the language of their colony, or their group inside of Finland. Xenia F. was connected to many Russians in Finland and abroad, but less to those who lived in the Soviet Union. For her, being Russian has always meant, first of all, being a Finnish Russian.

Kira L., (born in 1918), has a Polish father and a Baltic German mother (from mixed origin, as well), but Russian was included as a family language; Kira’s first school was a German school in Poland, but Kira’s parents divorced and her mother brought her to Finland where she had some property; the Russian language was studied steadily only at a Russian school, and Russian literature became – in her own words – ‘native’ (*rodnaja*). Russian cultural life for Kira L. was very intense in Helsinki, and there she met her husband, a Finnish Russian. Until today, Kira L. reproaches her mother for having enrolled her in a Russian school: “when we live here in Finland and we decided to stay, my life and my work would have been much easier for me if I were in a Finnish school”. Gradually, Kira’s friends changed into Finnish-speaking people. When the children in L.’s family were small, Russian was spoken at home – but after they went off to a Finnish school, the family language shifted to Finnish, because “I suffered from such multilinguality and blending, and it was difficult for me ... I wanted my children to have their own native land, or fatherland”, not like it was for emigrants. Still, Kira’s children can speak Russian without an accent, even if they have only a small vocabulary. Kira thinks that when different blood is blended, the main language becomes the language of the country in which you live. When speaking about patriotism, Kira thought that Finland has become everything for her, yet when she traveled to Poland, she felt that she was a Pole. Still, she wanted to come home to

Finland. Being Lutheran, Kira has buried her relatives in the Russian Orthodox cemetery. Her grandchildren cannot speak Russian, but they have conserved some Russian nursery rhymes which have been transmitted to the great-grandchildren, who now live far abroad.

Vasilij A. is 78 years old, and was born in Finland. His attitude towards his Russian origin has many layers. The language of his parents was Russian, but they were not the Russians of Finland. Neither were they the Russians of Russia, whom he learned to know afterwards. Vasilij has no doubt that he is Russian, but he says that the other Russians differ from him, and even if he says he is one of them, he understands that his world image is not typical of the group culture. His family was evacuated during the Winter War from the city of Vyborg, and he has served in the Finnish army. VA's family were citizens of Finland, but didn't change their names into more Finnish-sounding as many did: parents didn't want to, and he didn't think that it was necessary. He has a perfect command of all three languages and reads all of them well. Vasilij depended much on his parents' opinion, and as they were still alive, all of the Russian traditions were kept at their home. VA's parents have brought up their children as Russians, and they wished that they knew everything about Russia. During the post-war period of friendship between the Soviet Union and Finland, Vasilij had a good job connected with the Russian language, and profited from it. "I associate little among Russians. My wife is Finnish, and we don't speak Russian at home. When my parents were alive (it's long ago), we spoke Russian with them at home, and afterwards, when I got married, it ended. ... I was born in a Russian family or so-called emigrants, who once came from Russia to Karelia. It means that they possessed a summer cottage on the Karelian Isthmus, and they escaped, if it is possible to say so, when the revolution started ... And I must tell you, there were times when a part of the Finnish Finns referred to us, well, not very friendly. We were Russians, and Russians were not very loved, because Finland was under Russia's rule, and from that time on this certain unfriendly relationship persisted. Afterwards, relationships between Russia or at least between the Soviet Union and Finland, though not so good, were however better than others. ... As we were still children, we were ashamed of our parents, that they [couldn't speak any Finnish or Swedish], but we, we have received, I might say, we were playing only with Finnish children, so we learned Finnish automatically".

EP: *Did you think that you had to master reading and writing in Russian, too?*

VA: *Maybe we didn't think so, but our parents thought so, and they forced us to do it, and everything was normal, we didn't refuse it. Well, our parents wanted us to become Russians.*

EP: *Did your children preserve the Russian language?*

VA: *No. I am ashamed. I should be beaten for it. Why didn't I teach them? And they, my children, often say to me: why didn't you teach us to speak Russian? They are right.*

EP: *What do you think: has the fact that you were originally Russian helped or damaged you in your work?*

VA: *It has damaged me.*

Vasilij says he is a guilty person: guilty towards other Russians because he is different, towards his children because he hasn't transmitted his parent's language to them, guilty towards Finns because he feels that he is not like them. The only way out for him is to participate in the life of the Russian community, helping those who need his help.

According to the experience of Larisa B. (68 years, born on the Karelian Isthmus), the most important constructive elements of identity are: a state language, family language, a language of one's environment, education, friends and neighbors, family names, and social class. In her life story, these components often conflict with each other: Swedes, who formed Larisa's educational environment, were richer – but Larisa and her mother were poor. Russians were more educated – but there was no possibility to study Russian in Finland for Larisa. Communists wanted a better life for every man, and have many times helped Larisa and each other – but the normal life in Soviet Union was often disgusting. For LB, Russian is the language of her beloved mother and husband – but not exactly her own language, because her father is a Finn and her maiden family name is German. Larisa B. was able to fully develop her personality due to her contacts among Russian-speaking people. LB is always enthusiastic about improving the world, and for her, nothing is better than Finnish honesty, balanced relationships, and an orientation towards cleanliness and nature. Larisa is helpful when somebody else suffers, and she then tries to encourage him. She is very conservative in saying anything about her nationality, maybe because she doesn't want to hurt anyone she knows, and even though she speaks at

least three languages fluently, she doesn't identify herself with only one ethnic group. However, Larisa's children's first names are a compromise between Russian and Finnish names, and so is the interior design of her house. For LB's image of the world, languages may be learned for free; this process goes on consequently; languages do come in communication and progress step-by-step. Languages come to a person when one is open to them, but nobody can claim to represent any one nationality.

LB: *At home, we spoke in Russian of course, because when my parents were young, Finland was in Russia; a 'Grand Duchy', or however they called it. So my parents met first in St Petersburg, they studied there, learned to know each other, so. And my father's parents lived exactly in S., in a summer cottage. // Well, there was all-in-all quite a lot of Russians there, there was a whole Russian settlement. They moved in there, and I spent my childhood there. Russian was spoken, because you are interested in language, and my first language was certainly Russian.*

EP: *And how did your parents explain to themselves (or to you) that everybody is speaking Russian, but you are living in Finland?*

LB: *I don't know, I never was eager to know, and supposedly nobody ever told me anything about it. That was quite normal, because there / so, all the neighbors were also Russian, and even in the shop there a Fin/ a Russian couple worked there, there were / most evidently, we were acquainted with Russians, and in Vyborg there were lots of Russians. If we went there to visit somebody, we visited them, of course. And the Finnish language, we became familiar with it little-by-little, but sure we didn't have much time for it, because the war began in 1939, and we were evacuated afterwards.*

EP: *[Have there been representatives of other nationalities in your family?]*

LB: *Yes, but my mother was purely Russian. Well, how should I tell you that – purely Russian; my mother's father was Armenian, so his father, my grandfather, and a Russian grandmother.*

EP: *Did you ever meet them?*

LB: *No, they all died before I was born. And my father, my father has an interesting / he was a Finn after origin, but how should I tell you, ahm, one of his ancestors became orphaned, and his family name was S., and this little orphan aah was adopted, adopted by a German family, who took him to Germany, gave him a German family name [...and because they kept some ties to Finland, they had a summer cottage there].*

LB went through the first grade in Vyborg, where she became literate in Russian. Second grade for LB was accomplished at a Finnish school in the same small village where they lived. Larisa mentions that besides comprehension, Finnish pronunciation was the most difficult thing for her to learn. Her father died just before the war, and then the evacuation occurred to Central Finland, where everybody in the community was Finnish. After that, they came to Helsinki, where LB's older brother was working, and she was taken by her relatives to a Swedish school ("In Finland, nobody can live without Swedish"). LB spoke only one word of Swedish – 'ape'. In this situation, again, understanding was difficult, but so was writing from dictation. A girl who had one Finnish and one Swedish parent became Larisa's friend for a lifetime. Every summer, a Swedish-speaking family took LB to their summer cottage as a playmate for their daughter. Afterwards, LB never studied Finnish as a school subject, and her literary skills were transferred from Swedish into Russian and Finnish, so that she has a perfect command of all three languages. Larisa tells me: "And you know, what is now very strange is that, for example, I don't mention in what language I read a book. I can read this book in the Finnish language, if it is about Russia, and while I read it I imagine it for myself in Russian language. Also, when a TV-program is running, for example, in the Swedish language, and my husband afterwards watches it in Finnish, I tell him: why, what, they have already told it, it's all the same. I mean, in a way... these languages are not muddled in me, however, they have been acquired equally".

After LB graduated from professional school, the Russian language has always nourished her. As an interpreter, she went all over the world; she studied to be a teacher at a University in Russia and worked afterwards with language. Larisa also married within the Russian-speaking community. LB says: "Well, the first language for my children was Russian. It was not exactly because of the idea that the Russian language was... or depending on the idea or preservation of the Russian language. It simply depended on the fact that my mother lived with us, and my mother didn't speak any other language... And with the children, we communicated of course also in Russian, but I tried to give them Finnish as

well, to avoid conflicts with our surroundings, so they had friends among neighborhood children [in their language]. Well, little by little they acquired Finnish as well”.

For my next participant, a 64-year-old male, Pavel R., born in Vyborg, the Russian language has always played the most important role in his life, and he dedicates much time to improving the situation with Russian in Finland. Among Pavel’s ancestors are Finns, Germans, Czechs, Poles and Russians. His parents have studied in France, and his relatives live in different countries. He has studied at a Russian school, but had to receive a diploma in Finnish. PR has learned Swedish and many other languages as well. His professional life is connected with economics, and relations to Russia have long played a high role in it. I quote: “My ethnic background is multinational; thanks to the Russian language, I received a double identity. As regards language and culture, I can consider myself Russian; and regarding professional education, business correspondence, communication, national interests, having a perfect command of country’s language, I have the identity of a multicultural Finn, a Russian-speaking citizen of Finland. I am against assimilation. I am for integration, and for the possibility to acknowledge a double identity and a double citizenship”.

Nina G., who was born in 1924, counts herself as Russian, a position that has been reflected many times already. Her parents were citizens of Finland. They were born in Finland, but they studied in St. Petersburg, and never thought of themselves as Finns. Nina started to go to a German school in 1931, and attended it for 5 years (there were many Russians at that time in the German school, and Nina G. meets with them regularly). Next, NG came to a Finnish school. At home, everybody in NG’s family spoke Russian. In the street, Nina played with Finnish children. “I feel myself to be absolutely Russian, but I was born here, and I have lived my life here... and, fortunately, my husband was a Russian like me, and also born in Finland, and we always spoke Russian at home”. NG was studying Finnish as well by means of private lessons, and after some years she could speak it just like a native Finn; nobody could hear that she was not a Finn. Swedish was also learned through NG’s communication with her Swedish-speaking friends. She has studied Russian as a main subject at a Finnish university. Nina G. has stated that her birth country (*rodina*) is Finland, but her fatherland (*otechestvo*) is Russia, and she came to this conclusion after having experienced that Finns don’t like Russians. She didn’t like it when Finns criticized Russians, especially during the World War II, but she never masqueraded herself as a Finn, though she was not running in the streets crying in Russian like somebody who couldn’t behave himself. Nina is irritated when somebody speaks any language with accent, with mistakes; phonetics is important for her, and she emphasizes that it is difficult for Russians to speak Finnish well, and vice-versa. To maintain a high level of Russian, one must read a lot, and follow the television programs, and NG has transmitted Russian to her children and to some extent to grandchildren. For all three main languages, which NG speaks freely and perfectly, Russian is the one she prefers, and she would try to translate her opinions or thoughts into Russian rather than any other language, if she had a choice. “My language is Russian, and with my child, I cannot communicate with her, my soul simply doesn’t allow me [to speak any other language permanently with my children],” and NG’s iron principle was not to mix any foreign words into Russian. Nina’s husband has changed his first name into a Finnish name when he was at school, and after the war he changed his family name, but didn’t change his first name. Before, NG’s family always held all of the Russian festivities. Now, Nina prepares Russian food only when guests are expected.

Leonid K, a man who was born in 1923, to a mixed Russian-German-Swedish-French émigré family, received home education till 10-years-age, and hasn’t learned to speak Finnish without an accent. He became a Finnish citizen in the 1950s, and wanted to go to the Soviet Union for a while (some Finnish Russians returned to Russia, but many came back to Finland after the upheavals they experienced). LK is skeptical about nationality, and he tells a joke about Russian peasants in Finland: my parents are both Russians, but I am a Finn, and LK comments: “If my daddy and mummy are Russians, I cannot even physically be a Finn”. Yet, the grandchildren can be Finns. LK himself believes that he is no longer German, yet in his childhood German was spoken by both of his grandmothers at home. His wife originates from Russian peasants of Karelian Isthmus, and that’s why she went to a Finnish school and acquired Finnish as her home language long ago.

Rita I., a woman born in Finland in 1933, lived her entire life in Finland. Her mother was half Russian, half Greek, the daughter of an Orthodox priest, the descendant of a family who had been missionaries in Finland since at least 1680. Their home language was predominantly Russian, with

some Greek as well. Her father was half Polish, half Finnish, and their common home language in St. Petersburg was Russian. They flew to Finland after the revolution (this happened in 1919), and they gathered in Russian-speaking circles. RI began to learn Finnish at school, but her playmates were German, Swedish and Finnish-speaking. She was allowed to write her school examinations in all of the languages she knew, including Russian. There were not many Russian books at home, and Rita read more in Finnish than in Russian. Surprisingly enough, RI recalls that in the same family there were some family members who were able to speak and write in Russian, while the others could not, so that even in childhood the family had to choose different languages, depending on whom they were speaking with. Rita says that she was lazy about studying, but she was able to pick up different things without working very hard, and had lots of job connected with the Russian language and culture. RI belongs to the Constantinople patriarchate, not to Moscow's, and these people have adopted the religious practices of the Lutheran religion, which is dominant in the environment. RI has four children, but none of them speaks Russian, because their fathers were Finns, and RI was very busy and unable to speak regularly with them in Russian. Rita says that they blamed her many times for not speaking Russian with them. The previous generation was eager to preserve the Russian language, and this was not easy during the war time, when it demanded a certain courage to speak Russian openly. The Old Russians were against the Soviets, and were fighting against Bolshevism, not against Russia. In this case, the relationship between the ways of speaking and the cultural identification of the informant are closely related. Unfortunately, and maybe because the Orthodox tradition is not so important any more, the long tradition of speaking Russian though living among Finns (which lasted for so many centuries in this particular family) ceases here.

Maria N. (born in 1939 in Southern Finland) originates from an Orthodox Karelian family. Her parents who spoke Finnish at home, appreciated Russian as a language of education and culture, and tried to introduce as much Russian as possible into the life of their children (e.g., by sending them to stay in Russian-speaking families). Being a war child, MN spent her early childhood in Sweden in a family that cared for her. She forgot and later revived her two other languages.

The identity construction-in-process can also be seen in a conversation with my youngest informant Viktoria L., who is a 31-year-old woman born in Helsinki.

VL: *My first language at home with my parents was Russian, but my communication with other people, with neighbors, with friends... was in the Finnish language. I have the impression that both Russian and Finnish languages were developing in me equally, at the same time. Not as it was with my elder sister, whose Finnish language remained weaker, in the first years. And then, yes, at home we were reared by a Russian grandmother who spoke only Russian. Well, at two-and-a-half I was put into a kindergarten, a kindergarten at the Russian school... In the kindergarten, Russian and Finnish were spoken. But I think that my Finnish was all the time growing stronger, because communication with all friends, with neighbors, with everyone was in the Finnish language.*

EP: *And with your sisters?*

VL: *First in Russian, and then very quickly we began to learn more Finnish. Then I studied at the Finnish-Russian school (precisely, it was a Russian-Finnish school at that time) and they taught in both languages. [Afterwards, VL studied in Finnish.]*

EP: *What do you think... is there any difference between your spoken Russian and your written Russian?*

VL: *The difference is obvious. Exactly, when I was in school... I didn't see it. And now, because I haven't written in Russian for a long time, it is difficult for me to start to... write a letter, for example. Because I have the impression that when I write I make big mistakes. When I speak, it is not so clear, or, let's say, it is not so dangerous, and when I write... I am ashamed to write. [But VL says she has no problems writing in Finnish.]*

Thinking of people constructing their attitude towards their first language for somebody else (and this somebody else also being a member of the Russian-speaking community) demands combining the text of one's own life with the lived experiences of the general participants, as well as a broader context of the history and policies of the countries involved. The present situation for the Old Russians is a quiet one; their reflections about the previous life are balanced, and there are no longer any bad consequences that could result from what they told me. Descriptive, narrative, retrospective and personal points of view underline the intersection between culture, language and the identity of those

who haven't abandoned their mother tongue, despite the fact that many others in their environment have chosen to do so.

4.3 Excerpts from the life stories of new Russians

It is no mystery that children who are members of immigrant families are more involved in the contemporary life of Finland, have little or no remnants from a life in Russia, and identify themselves with their peers, whether they are originally from Russia or not. So, a girl Alina P., aged 12, has lived all her life through in Finland. Her parents are Russian and speak Russian with her. "When asked, if am Finnish, I say, I am a half. I say that I am born in Russia, and immediately afterwards I was brought to Finland. And for this side of my personality, I am a Finn. Finns do not relate very well to Russians. I don't want to be Russian in Finland; otherwise, I have nothing against it. People always become confused when they come to know that I am Russian. It is not pleasant when they discuss how Russians are typically aggressive and bad. I don't say at first that I am Russian. When asked, I try to say that I was born in Russia, but I am a citizen of Finland, and I live my whole life long in Finland. That I am Russian, I don't say. Only sometimes... I learned at a Swedish school. I know Finnish, because I have always lived in Finland. I have started to learn Swedish at the kindergarten, and then I came to a Swedish school, and everybody there communicates and learns in Swedish... From the very beginning, I studied reading and writing in Swedish and Russian. In Finnish, I haven't learned to read or write with purpose, but I can do it well without any lessons... Nobody can say that I am not a Finn... My mother tongue is Russian. My important, main language is Swedish and Russian. At school, I speak Swedish. In the town, I speak Finnish and with my Finnish friends as well. At home, I speak Russian, and I study English and French at school... I code-switch from Swedish to Finnish when I don't remember the right word or cannot express myself. Sometimes I switch from Russian to Swedish or Finnish for the same reasons, and my parents prompt to me to use the right Russian word. If you want to maintain Russian, you have to go to courses, communicate in Russian, and read. Some people need it, some not. When somebody wants to live in Russian, he likes it. And if somebody is fed up and sick with this Russian, for which everybody hates him in Finland... I am sure that I'll teach my children Russian. I feel sad, when I think that they will speak Russian badly".

The age of Alina – 12 years – is the one most sensitive to identity formation. Many young people who grew up in Finland from age 7-12 and are now 18-25 years old, having perfect command of both languages in question and speaking many other languages, remember having passed through a difficult period in their life (the puberty period) and they didn't know who they were, Finns or Russians. They have learned to think that they are Russians in Finland (or anywhere else in the world) but Finns in Russia. They laugh about their grandparents in Russia who dislike Jews and people with dark skin (yet are themselves multicultural, able to adapt themselves to any culture). They speak Finnish better than Russian, and would like to improve their mother tongue. Many have already forgotten their mother tongue, if they haven't been to Russia since their immigration (and their parents address them in Finnish).

Among the newcomers who are 18-19 years old and have lived in Finland for 1.5 to 3.5 years, some told me they had no problems switching from Finnish to Russian and vice versa. Yet, others some again were worried about the fact that they haven't yet acquired Finnish properly. One young man was searching for a Finnish girlfriend, yet preferred to have Russian-speaking friends. Another said that "I liked to be a Finn among Russians in Russia, and now if I am asked about my nationality, I'll answer: I am a Finn in Russian language". Others said they were Russians or Finns according to what they had on their former passports. Nobody believed they had problems with nationality definition either before or since. According to one young man: "it isn't written on my forehead that I am a Finn", so nobody asked him who he was when he lived in Russia. One young girl had a perfect, calm and proud feeling to be Russian. One young man, who was Ukrainian, said that he was happy not to be a Russian. In contrast to the experience of their grandparents, most of the youngsters hadn't changed their place of residence until they came to Finland.

A rather special (yet not unique) case was represented by a man Sergej X., aged 20, who studies in Finland and has lived here for four years already. Let's listen to him. "I speak both languages, Finnish and Swedish, without accent, and I study in Swedish. My mother tongues are two: Russian and English,

because I lived and studied in England. I am interested in speaking all languages without any accent. Nobody can tell that I am Russian from my accent. Everybody can speak in this way, but it is not important for everyone. First, I wanted to mimic my surroundings, because many Russians were saying bad things about themselves, and there was lots of propaganda against our government. On the TV, lots of bad things were shown about Russians. I didn't want to show that I am Russian. I read Orthodox literature, but I don't read much. I don't like Finns, and I am going back to Russia when I am finished with my studies. A Russian always remains himself. I don't want to give anything to the Finnish culture, but I want to influence through my example the image of a Russian... I don't want to be a part of a minority. I don't want Finns to think that it is better in Finland than in Russia, that's why I have to behave as a Finn. Because Russia is a multinational country, it is not for me to be a part of something, it is only on paper. In practice, it is different. For me, identity is not important."

Aljona J., a 26-year-old woman, has lived in Finland for 10 years. She has studied at school in Russia, and studied at high school and professional school in Finland. Her grandmother is Ingrian, and her husband's family used to live in Latvia; they have three children. She writes: "We are a Russian family and we have Russian children. We will try to conserve Russian traditions, language and culture, we'll make future new members of our family acquainted with those traditions, if our children have mixed families. Our Finnish has to be improved, but it is not an obstacle to receive a job and to communicate. To some extent, we are Russophiles, but we also treat the culture of the country we are living in with respect".

Raisa E., a young woman, 32, is married to a Finn. She has two children and originates from Central Russia. She mentions: "It is difficult to say what meaning nationality had for me in my youth. At this moment, I think that all nationalities are equal".

Another woman, Liza U., aged 40, has lived in Finland for five years. Most of her relatives were Finns or Ingrians. One great-grandfather was Russian. Liza spoke two languages before school, but later spoke only Russian. For grandparents who spoke Russian with an accent, and spoke Finnish better than Russian, their nationality didn't matter especially, because they never spoke about it in Liza's childhood or later, there were no comments about the nationality of anyone. "In my childhood, I was always proud to be a Finn; when I received my passport, I had no hesitations about what nationality I should write in. And now, at a mature age, my attitude towards nationality hasn't almost changed. 'Almost' means that there are changes. For example, I think with disapproval about the citizens of the Baltic States who exterminate Russians in their territory; or about Africans who are over-free here in Finland; or about terrorists of the Eastern nationalities... About myself, I said in Russia that I am a Finn, and here I say that I am Ingrian".

Pjotr B., a man aged 43, was born in Central Russia. Married to a Finnish woman, he has lived in Finland for 12 years. Among his ancestors were Finnish Swedes; that's why he changed his name into a Swedish one when he became a citizen of Finland. Yet, he pretends that in the deep of his soul he is only Russian. About himself, he says that he is a Finnish Russian. His Finnish is far from perfect, and his wife speaks Russian and Finnish to him. His citizenship didn't change his national thinking.

One 50-year-old woman (Olga A.) has graduated from a technical university in Russia. Her Finnish is fluent and her Russian is of the highest quality. "My parents spoke Ingrian at home, but if necessary, they could speak both Russian and Estonian. They were both born in the Eastern part of Leningrad district [they were workers], and, luckily, they were uncommonly wise people: despite the primary-only education they had received, they were never racists. Furthermore, I count myself as having grown up on Russian fine literature that, to my mind, vaccinates one against racism. I am deeply convinced that all nationalities have their virtues and weaknesses. I always have difficulties telling what nationality I am. In this period of my life, I say 'fortunately, I am not a Russian, and fortunately, I am not a Finn'".

Another woman (Natalia K.), aged 50, whose mother is Russian and whose father is a Finn, was born in Russia and has lived in Finland for six years. "Nationality was always important in our family. Grandmothers didn't contact each other, the Finnish grandmother didn't like her Russian daughters-in-law, the Russian grandmother and mother, when problems arose, always emphasized that my father was a Finn. My previous husband's father was killed in the war by Finns, and he didn't see his son. So, in my family, conversations about this theme often cropped up. And the young people are not indifferent now. The old generation of Finns are maintaining relationships with us Russians here, but not all of them. And young people avoid contacts with us, and sometimes even refer negatively to us".

One woman (Ksenija P.), aged 50, an Ingrian returnee: “I have lived in Finland for 4.5 years already, and I have queued up in St. Petersburg for four years for the permission to come here. I couldn’t even imagine how much was waiting for me during the removal to the primordial homeland of my ancestors. Here, I have even experienced racism against me, I am not afraid to write about it. For the indigenous people, it doesn’t matter that, after all, in my documents I have the nationality ‘Finnish’. For them, I am Russian, as in my homeland I am ‘chuxna’ [a pejorative nickname for Finns]. Only when I bumped into it myself in life, only then did I remember mother’s words from her story. In the years of the war, my mother lived in Finland... for 1.5 years, then came back to Russia. I asked mother all the time, why did she return and why has she accepted new suffering and ordeals, because in Finland, in the land of the forest fairy-tale, her life would be composed otherwise. She told me that this ‘fairy-tale land’ didn’t accept her in the way that she wanted, though my mother spoke Finnish better than Russian... My parents lived a long life. Their homeland was always Russia, the language was Finnish, and they always spoke Russian with an accent, like me, I speak Finnish now, which means, even now, I cannot speak the words correctly”. She wants to study Finnish properly and to write a novel about her parents’ life. It’s easier for her and her grown-up daughter, both of whom are married to Finns, to speak Russian to each other, and she thinks that Russia will remain her first homeland, while Finland remains the second one.

Another woman (Maria D.), aged 59, who is half Russian and half Jewish, is married to a Finn and has been living in Finland for 13 years. “I consider myself as being Russian, and so I do respond to this question. This is an ordinary self-feeling for half-blooded people who are originating from Russia. I do not refuse my Jewishness, but Russian language, Russian culture and Orthodoxy (I am baptized) truly define my identity... I know some Russian people (with a drop of Ingrian blood) who are trying to speak Finnish in the street under the eyes of the other people, and are giving absolutely Finnish names to their children. It is looking ridiculous and little pathetic, but I don’t blame them... I am seeking to communicate with Russians on purpose. I am attracted by people, not by nationality”.

A very important testimony was given by Aleksii T., a 75-year-old man who was born in Russia from a Finnish father who has served in the Russian army, and an Ingrian mother. He writes: “How I did think about nationality in different periods of my life? In childhood, there was total incomprehension of it at all. Children are children. In youth, it was very vexing, when you were brought into the situation of a person with restricted rights, for instance, you counted as “low quality”, and one had to hide his nationality, even though every human should be proud of his people, culture and language. One was never very successful in hiding his nationality for a long time. It always became known, particularly when documents were legalized, after the first names and the family names. Some people blamed us for our naïveté and sympathized with us. This kept our spirits up. But there were others who called us fibbers, liars and turned away from us. True, these were few, and they were, in all probability, fanatics overwhelmed by stereotypes and complexes.

“Now, at the age of 75, having lived in Finland for 5 years, I came to the conclusion that in the USSR and in Russia I haven’t been a Russian, and in Finland, I am not a Finn. Every observant local Finn realizes immediately that I have lived for a long time in Russia, even if I speak Finnish fluently, but I haven’t been a single day in a Finnish school, and it can be seen at once... What is my nationality? I always responded that I am a Finn and didn’t hide it, and sometimes I even said it with a certain pride, although I speak Russian better than Finnish. That is the result of my education, received in Russian, and of the 70 years I have lived in Russia. Some officials I know, because of our friendship, proposed to change my nationality, because there was absolutely no traces of an accent in my speech. I have categorically rejected this proposal. I am a Finn and I am not going to change my nationality...

“I can write in Finnish. I have learned it by myself, but a big quantity of mistakes are always jumping out. I allow to myself to write only to my friends (in letters), the same sort of ‘(il)literate’ as me. And any formal, bureaucratic language is inaccessible for me.

“Many times I have been told, especially by Finns of my age, that my language is one of 1930s or 1940s. It is out of date, not in pace with time, without development and the other alterations that language has gone through. It is without the changes which happened in the country and in the world as result of political and technical progress. They told me my language is different from the modern one, even if it is correct. There is neither a Russian, nor Ingrian, nor Karelian accent in it”.

With this in mind, even among the same age groups views of Russian speakers, their personal linguistic situations are different. Their identity is multifaceted and multicultural more than it is bilingual. There are only a few examples of those who are nearly balanced bilinguals in both languages. According to the quantity of time the New Russians have lived in Finland, they can be either more or less optimistic (or pessimistic) about their future role in a multicultural Finnish community. Even as it is homogenizing this culturally and linguistically diverse group of Russian speakers, the Finnish society of today replaces the former ideas of internationalism and nationality with notions of multiculturalism and ethnicity. I hope that the results of this study will show that the Russian-speaking community has always been ethnically and politically diverse, that the feeling of being wrong towards the other people was strong, but the necessity to find a common linguistic or cultural platform under one's feet was for all subjects crucial.

5. Conclusions

There are many possibilities for defining oneself as "belonging to a nationality". The historical background of one's family is in no case the sole solution, because there are almost no families with one single heritage. This fact keeps us from ascribing without hesitation one and only one nationality to oneself. Moreover, people from multiethnic backgrounds seem to choose their identity with more ease in a new situation, even if they had difficulties with it in their former surroundings. In this sense, immigration helps to make the process of choice not quite as acute as it was before. The mirror situation is a release of former fears of "not being like everybody else". One of the reasons for this is the Finnish attitude not only toward Russians, but to other nationalities as well, in particular their lack of knowledge in the questions of different nationalities of the former Soviet Union and Russia. Immigrants from Russia are proud to be more competent in answering such questions, as well as being aware of the variety of nationalities, and understanding ethnic prejudices and stereotypes. Their ethnic and national experience is, in their own eyes, a value that is very important. On the other hand, speakers of Russian do not really form an actual ethnic group, because they don't share ideas of common ancestry and have no common homeland (only a legendary Soviet Union which is hated by many). St. Petersburg has thus developed into an important link to Russia, and has become more important for Russian speakers than other cities of Russia (independent of the place they are from).

The linguistic identity of a speaker of Russian in Finland is composed in dissimilar proportions of a combination of Russian and Finnish words, constructions, realities, experiences, preferences and stereotypes. Russian-speaking people share not only the Russian, but also the Finnish cultural identities. When communicating within their own constellations, they do not need to state many things that are obvious. When speaking to Finns, however, they holding back a part of their identity for themselves. When speaking to Russians in Russia, they are perceived as Finns and are often interpreted wrongly.

Old Russians in Finland, who have maintained Russian (and it seems after the interviews that only a small part of possible bilingual speakers have become Russian-speaking), are to a great majority also competent speakers of other languages; Swedish German and English among them. Only one woman spoke (according to her own testimony) a poor sort of Finnish and extricated from sticky situations with the help of Russian.

By examining the voices of the speakers of Russian in Finland, we can portray their experience of having rooted in Finland, as well as their culture shock, their adjustment to the double identity in which they live, and the different strategies they choose to balance and justify their past, present and future. The fact that being bilingual is new to Russians with a Soviet background as a 'dominant nation'; and because of the general legal requirements of the former school-teaching in foreign languages, Finnish sometimes becomes the only second language the Russian-speaking immigrants know. For Russians, to speak Finnish isn't a typical situation at all, but it is very common for Finnish Russians. Russians usually raise their voices for protection of their human rights, if they imagine they have been treated unequally, or if they are treated differently from the way they are used to. Russians living in Finland are not aware of their linguistic rights, and they believe that they have to learn Finnish, even if it is complicated. With the Old Russians, their former inferiority complex has been surmounted progressively by the perfect command of many languages, good jobs, and relationships within the Orthodox community. With the New Russians, resilient ties to Russia or other countries of origin

(because they come from multiple parts of the former Soviet Union) and other countries (especially those in which Russian emigrants live) replace the necessity to feel completely at home in Finland. With Ingrians, peripetia of their fates and the impossibility of finding again the lost country of their legends (Ingria or Ingermanland) underscores the fact that there is no place on Earth where they can feel completely at home. In the Russian Finns (or Finnish returnees), the wish to incorporate oneself into the patterns of Finnish life is very pronounced, and they often try to be neutral in their overall appraisals and statements. To my mind, discrepancies between speakers of Russian must be concealed, while common features are generalized. In other words, the fact that every native or near-native speaker of Russian has a multicultural experience serves to function as an aggregate cultural reference for all, independent of any singular ethnicity and nationality. The consciousness of the Russian-speaking community is absolutely not ethnic, but is rather linguistic and cultural. The overarching Russian cultural identification is composed of different layers, and if there is no possibility of acquiring the plausible sociolinguistic contexts of its use, the whole culture fails. This identity is typically not a nationalistic one (even if among the Russian-speakers living in Finland those may be encountered who are overly too patriotic toward Russia) and not particularly influenced by the current politics, though suffering from its proximity. For most of the Russians, assimilation was a natural process in the 20th century, and the language that had developing during their diaspora has lost its vivacity.

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